1	2	3	4
24.	Ranchi	10210	7135
25.	Srinagar	10080	5164
26.	Surat	7165	21862
27.	Thane	74382	39008
28.	Trichy	217300	132780
29.	Trivandrum	112509	61173
30.	Vishakhapatnam	50346	32221
	TOTAL	2955529	1510832

Official policy to deal with hostage situation

2447. SHRI MANOJ BHATTACHARYA: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have in place any set official policy to deal with the hostage situation by domestic and foreign terrorists;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) if not, the reasons therefor; and

(d) whether there is any proposal to formulate basic guidelines to deal the cases of hostages which of late, have started increasing and if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI RAO INDERJIT SINGH): (a) to (d) It is the policy of the Government of India not to compromise with terrorist groups or elements. However, while adhering to this principle, the objective of the Government is to ensure the safety and well-being of all its citizens, whether in India or abroad. In case of hostage-taking, Governments makes all efforts possible to secure the early and safe release of its nationals. In order to deal with hostage situations, the Government has an institutionalised mechanism in place. There is a crisis management group which is set up immediately and is tasked with the constant monitoring and handling of the situation in close consultation with concerned agencies, our diplomatic missions abroad and with foreign governments. The Cabinet Secretary also holds a parallel set of inter-ministerial meetings, as required, to take appropriate decisions. The Cabinet Committee on Political Affairs may

also meet, as necessary, to review the situation and take appropriate decisions. This mechanism remains in force until the crisis ends. It needs to be pointed out that no two hostage situations are entirely similar and different responses may be required depending upon specific circumstances to reach the objectives of Government policy.

India's policy towards West Asia

2448. SHRI MANOJ BHATTACHARYA: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether there have been a paradigm shift in India's policy towards the West Asia; and

(b) if so, the details thereof and reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI RAO INDERJIT SINGH): (a) & (b) The objective of the Government is to give a fresh thrust to India's traditional ties with the countries of West Asia. In this context, Government will remain committed to fully supporting, the legitimate aspirations of the Palestinian people for a homeland of their own. It is also committed to participating in all endeavours aimed at bringing stability to Iraq and for ensuring the well being of the Iraqi people. Government will build upon the traditionally strong relations with the countries of West Asia which are based on cultural affinities, economic interaction and a vibrant Indian expatriate community.

Norms for U.S. citizenship

2449. SHRI MANOJ BHATTACHARYA: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the U.S. Administration has set very rigorous norms for the immigrants who intend to adopt the U.S. citizenship;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) Government's reaction thereto?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI RAO INDERJIT SINGH): (a) and (b) The rules for acquisition of US citizenship by naturalisation require that the applicant:

i. must be 18 years of age;